



## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 28, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting through Zoom Platform

**Members Present:** Ald. Braithwaite (Chair), Ald. Wilson, Ald. Simmons, Lisa Dziekan, Ald. Wynne, Ald. Rainey, Scott Ogawa (left at 7 p.m.), Peter Isaac

**Members Absent:** Kelly Gallagher

**Staff Present:** P. Martínez, K. Boden

### **1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

### **2. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES**

Members participated electronically or by telephone.

Ald. Simmons moved to suspend the rules. Ald. Wynne seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 23, 2020**

Ald. Wynne moved to approve. Ald. Rainey seconded with corrected name spellings. Motion passed unanimously.

### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment

### **5. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

A. Request for Funding for the 2020 Great Merchants Grant Program

Ald. Braithwaite introduced the financial request for \$5,948, with \$1,260 requested for Evanston Made and \$4,688 requested for the Central Street business district.

Ms. Katie Boden noted that this is the first Great Merchants Grant funding request for Evanston Made and invited the Executive Director Lisa Degliatoni to speak about their Art Under Glass program which utilizes vacant storefronts for local art installations. Ms. Degliantoni provided an overview of Evanston Made's Art Under Glass program and the collateral materials they are producing to market this initiative and create awareness.

Ms. Dziekan inquired why the requested amount was \$2,500 and the recommended amount was \$1,250. Ms. Boden explained that the Great Merchants Grant only allows for a 50% match in funds for affinity groups.

Ald Simmons asked how to support this program and whether there was an individual or centralized platform for purchasing. Ms. Degliantoni responded that if the artisan does not have their own website they can help facilitate sales through the Evanston Made Art Shop. Ald. Simmons inquired how to participate in this program. Ms. Degliantoni explained one could get involved with this initiative by visiting the Evanston Made website.

Ald. Simmons moved approval. Ald. Rainey seconded. Motion passes 8-0.

B. Approval of Special Service Area #6 (Main-Dempster Mile) Levy Totaling \$221,000  
Ald. Braithwaite introduced the levy request for \$221,000.

Main-Dempster Mile (MDM) Executive Director Katherine Gotsick clarified that the actual budget for 2021 was \$206,000. Ms. Paulina Martinez explained that the \$221,000 was the maximum amount they were eligible for. Ms. Gotsick stated that they were being conservative in their estimate due to uncertainty in property tax collection and property valuations.

Ald. Wilson expressed his appreciation for MDM activities. Ald. Simmons also expressed gratitude for the outreach in sharing resources with other districts outside of Main-Dempster Mile.

Ald. Simmons moved approval. Ald. Rainey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Ald. Rainey noticed they did not hear from Central Street regarding their Great Merchant Grant funding request. Laura Brown, representing the Central Street SSA, provided a brief description of how they would be using the funds to purchase holiday wreaths to complement the lighting that was being installed.

C. Approval of Special Service Area #7 (Central Street East) Levy Totaling \$115,000  
Ald. Wilson introduced the levy request for \$115,000.

Ms. Brown presented an overview of the Central Street SSA, their organizational structure, budget and 2020 activities and campaigns.

Ald. Rainey inquired about the materials used for the striping on the sidewalks. Ms. Brown answered that it is a water soluble material similar to that used on streets and that they would plan to keep it on through the holidays.

Ald. Wilson moved approval. Ald. Simmons seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

D. Approval of Special Service Area #8 (Central Street West) Levy Totaling \$60,200  
Ald. Wynne introduced the levy request for \$60,200.

Ald. Wynne moved approval. Ald. Simmons seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

E. Approval of Special Service Area #9 (Downtown Evanston) Levy Totaling \$610,995  
Ald. Wynne introduced the levy request for \$610,995.

Downtown Evanston Executive Director Annie Coakley presented the Downtown Evanston 2021 budget and an overview of all of their 2020 activities, events, and campaigns.

Ald. Simmons inquired about the longevity of the current Make Lemonade campaign. Ms. Coakley explained it will run for one month and ends in November. She also discussed further marketing strategies.

Ms. Dziekan inquired about tree replacement on the southside of Fountain Square and at whose cost. Ms. Coakley thinks the contractor had to replace them. Ms. Dziekan asked about the lights and whether anything was being done about outdoor dining. Ms. Coakley explained that there are daily discussions about this topic and how they can help extend winter outdoor dining. They have explored tents and various structures, which can be cost prohibitive for many restaurants, but the most important element is heating. The COVID task force has looked into creative options and what can be done.

Ms. Gotsick explained that all restaurants are different in their capacity, budget, and willingness to invest in outdoor dining. She also mentioned that there has been some hesitancy of residents to eat outside in winter months. Ms. Coakley said they will be focusing on take out campaigns.

Ald. Wynne moved approval. Ald. Rainey seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

Ald. Simmons expressed gratitude for the use of lights for the 5th Ward and asked Ms. Martinez to follow up on procuring lighting and wreaths for the area.

#### F. Creation of a New Tax Increment Finance District in Fifth Ward

Ald. Simmons introduced the request to have a consultant look at the feasibility of a new TIF district and discussed the need to address underutilized areas with businesses along Simpson/Ashland and the north side of Emerson that are not included in the current TIF. She noted that businesses in this area could benefit from a TIF to provide opportunities for legacy businesses, fund needed improvements, and foster new business attraction. Asking for committee support to hire a consultant to learn more about possible opportunities for the 5th Ward community.

Ald. Rainey asked about the boundary of the new TIF and whether it differed from the current TIF District 6. Mr. Isaac and Ms. Martinez clarified the boundary of the proposed study area that excludes the current TIF District 6 area.

Ald. Simmons mentioned the current TIF boundary does not include the Family Focus building, businesses along Central, and Emerson to Green Bay Rd. These areas could benefit from inclusion in a TIF.

Ms. Martinez stated that there are no current plans to acquire residential properties for redevelopment.

In the interest of efficiency, and based on the minimal dollar amount of the request, Ald. Braithwaite asked for support to move forward with this request with Mr. Bob Rychlicki from Kane McKenna rather than issue an RFP. Ald. Simmons and Ald. Wynne expressed support. Ms. Martinez will check with the legal department to ensure there are no concerns.

Ald. Simmons moved approval. Ald. Wilson seconded. Motion passed 6-1-0. Mr. Isaac abstained.

## 5. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

### A. Renewal of the Storefront Modernization Program for 2021

Ald. Wilson would like to explore this further but limit the program to CDBG eligible and TIF collocated properties. Ald. Braithwaite agreed.

Ald. Simmons also agreed but has concerns that businesses in certain areas in the 5th Ward, specifically Simpson and Ashland, would not be included. Ald. Wynne clarified that those businesses are included in the CDBG target areas.

## 6. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Monthly Economic Development Communication

#### B. Announcements/Updates from EDC Members

Ald. Rainey announced an upcoming meeting the next day with Mr. Rychlicki from Kane McKenna about business in TIF districts to discuss ways to assist them and how aldermen can become more involved in budgeting TIF funds for their wards.

Ald. Wynne mentioned that they created an advisory board as part of one of the TIF ordinances to determine priority items. Streetscape and sewer repairs were top priority but they also discussed other TIF eligible needs.

Ald. Rainey said we have not yet explored TIF funds to help our businesses and it is good to revisit ways to help businesses outside of the traditional funding being used. She will send out the meeting information when available.

Ms. Dziekan inquired about the Economic Development presentation that was tabled in the previous committee meeting. Ms. Martinez explained that it will be brought to the December meeting so that more time and attention could be spent focused on the presentation.

Ald. Braithwaite confirmed that the next EDC committee meeting will be held on December 2 and moved to 6 p.m.

## 6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.